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## **County to Conduct First-Ever Comprehensive Assessment of Parks and Rec Facilities**

Hoping to get an aerial view of the green spaces in Los Angeles County, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved Tuesday an unprecedented analysis of all the parks, hiking trails, botanical gardens, wildlife sanctuaries and similar venues within its borders.

The first-ever Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment would help determine the most efficient way to operate and maintain existing assets. It would also identify the communities that remain underserved, and include an inventory of potential projects and their respective funding requirements.

“The final product will not only identify geographic areas with the highest need for parks and open space, but will identify, prioritize, and outline costs for specific park and/or open space projects,” Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Michael Antonovich said in a joint motion.

“This effort has never been done before and it is much needed,” Ridley-Thomas added. “Parks and recreational facilities can enhance and even transform neighborhoods. We must continue to bring green spaces to communities that need it, and enhance the parks and open spaces that we already have.”

The analysis could position the county to better compete for public and private funding, as well as make the case for creating a revenue stream through a ballot measure in 2016.

Currently, the county relies on Proposition A, a parcel tax approved by voters in 1992, to generate \$52 million annually for park construction and maintenance, beach cleanup, the acquisition and preservation open space, and other purposes. Proposition A, however, is set to expire this June.

The board sought an extension by putting Proposition P on the ballot last November, but it failed to muster the two-thirds majority required for passage. Among the criticisms of Proposition P was the lack of a “needs assessment” that would justify continuing to pay the parcel tax.

The Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment approved Tuesday is estimated to cost \$3.5 million, and take about 16 months.

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